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IN THE MATTER OF The Public Inquiries Act, being Chapter 258 of The Revised Statutes of Alberta, 1955, and Amendments thereto; and,

IN THE MATTER OF an Inquiry by a Royal Commission into the matters set out in Order-in-Council 861/67 respecting the use or attempted use by the Honourable Alfred J. Hooke of his office as a member of the Executive Council of Alberta, and the use or attempted use by Edgar W. Hinman of his office as a member of the Executive Council of Alberta.

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## PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE W. J. C. KIRBY

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C. W. CLEMENT, Esq., Q.C.,	Commission Counsel
S. A. FRIEDMAN, Esq., Q.C.,	Departments of Government
S. H. McCUAIG, Esq., Q.C.	E. W. Hinman, Esq.
L. MAYNARD, Esq., Q.C.,	The Honourable Alfred J. Hooke
W. B. GILL, Esq., Q.C.,	G. A. Turcott, Esq. Mr. Neil Reimer
G. A. C. STEER, Esq., Q.C.	Dr. C. A. Allard
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N. S. CRAWFORD, Esq., and J. D. HILL, Esq.	Progressive Conservative Party of Alberta
G. S. D. Wright, Esq.	Alberta New Democratic Party

W. ALAN SHORT, ESQ.,  
Clerk to the Commission.

VOLUME No. 12

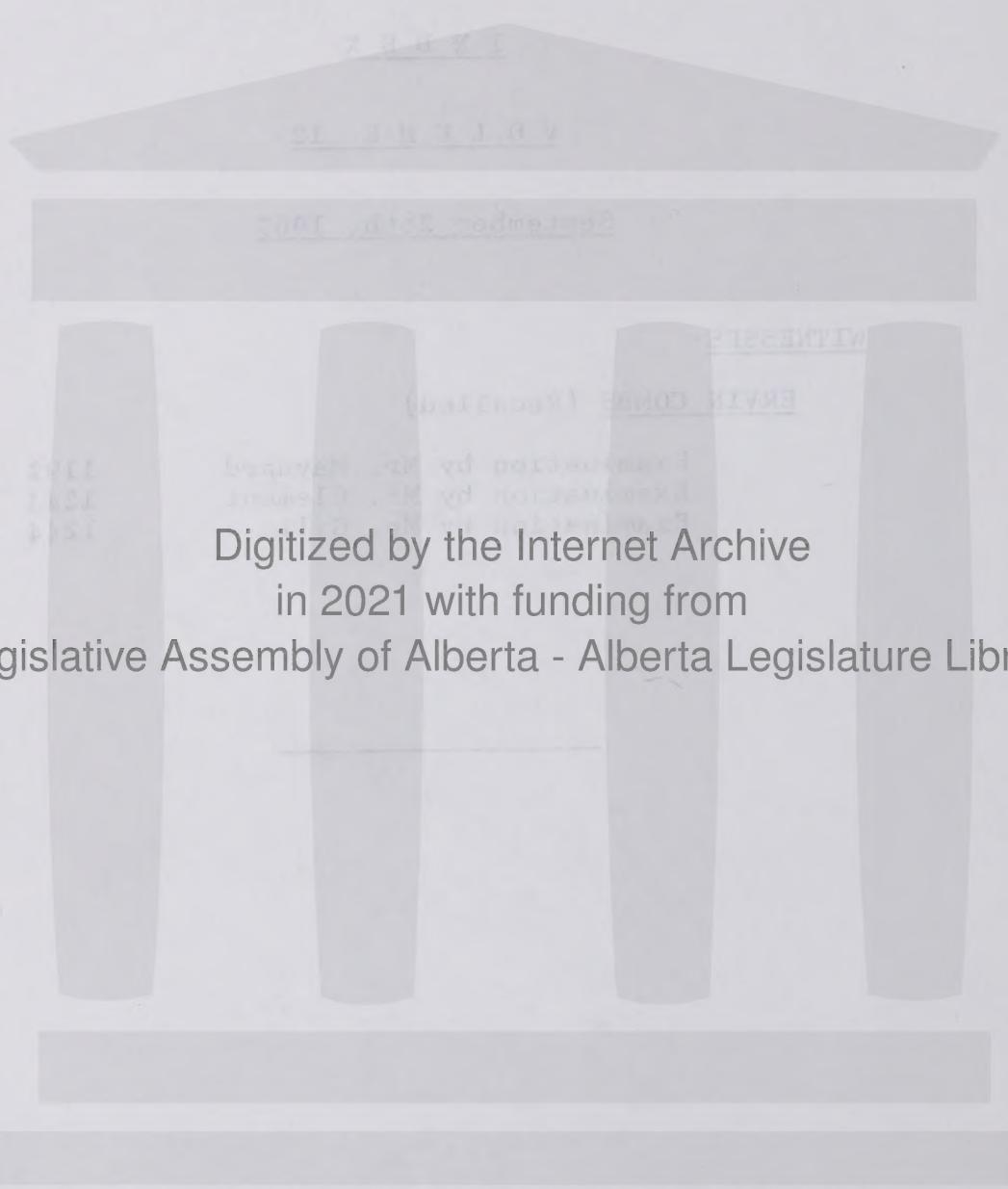
DATE September 28, 1967  
(Pages 1192 - 1247)

Supreme Court Reporters  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA



I N D E XV O L U M E 12September 28th, 1967WITNESSES:ERVIN COMBS (Recalled)

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IN THE MATTER OF The Alberta Provincial Council  
of Alberta EXHIBITS

IN THE MATTER OF The Alberta Provincial Council  
of Alberta VOLUME 12

September 28th, 1967

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1-P-1

Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

PROCEEDINGS before The Honourable Mr. Justice W.J.C. Kirby, this 28th day of September, A.D. 1967, at 9:00 o'clock in the morning, at the Court House, in the City of Edmonton, Province of Alberta.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Clement?

MR. CLEMENT: Mr. Commissioner you will recall that Mr. Coombs was released until this morning, Mr. Maynard was not in a position to cross-examine Mr. Coombs until some further evidence had come before you and I would suggest sir that Mr. Coombs be recalled to the box now and, if possible, his evidence completed.

I realize sir it is an interjection in Mr. Campbell's cross-examination but perhaps this is a more convenient way of calling him.

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr. Coombs will you take the witness stand.

ERVIN COOMBS, examined by Mr. Maynard:

MR. MAYNARD: Mr. Commissioner, you will recall that at the time Mr. Coombs was under examination the first instance, we were dealing with Sherwood Park Properties and there was some matter brought up relating to Ideal Homes and it was my understanding that Ideal Homes was to be dealt with as a separate item in the business before the Commission with the result that I suggest that possibly we could delay Mr. Coombs examination in these matters until the matter of Ideal Homes is before us. In accordance with the first schedule that was presented to the Commission it was expected



1-P-2

Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

MR. MAYNARD: (cont.) that Ideal Homes would have been reached a long time ago.

It has since become quite apparent that there are certain matters that relate around Ideal Homes and the Sherwood Park Property or Campbelltown and some of these matters have already been gone into and my examination of Mr. Coombs was deferred specifically because of Ideal Homes but, I feel in view of the inter-relationship of the two matters I think possibly we could make more progress if I could deal with the matter as a comprehensive unit and I will be through with Mr. Coombs as far as I am concerned with Ideal Homes.

THE COMMISSIONER: In other words, you are prepared to go on with your cross-examination now?

MR. MAYNARD: Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: But you are going to cover the whole field?

MR. MAYNARD: Yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: Have any of you gentlemen any objection to that? Mr. Coombs, I remind you you are still under oath in these proceedings, you understand that?

A Yes. Justice Kirby if I might relate, with your permission, that I gave evidence here on the 12th of this month, I appeared here, concerning a statement that I delivered lumber to one Mr. --

Q MR. MAYNARD: I can't hear you Mr. Coombs?



1-P-3

Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A One Mr. Lucien Maynard. This was denied in the court here. I stated that I could go to Mr. Maynard's place or the place where I delivered this lumber. I didn't associate Mr. Maynard's face as being the man that I had sold lumber to before. On the 19th when I was summonsed here, or, the evening of the 18th, I went to Mr. Maynard's original place of residence, where I delivered the lumber, to Mr. Maynard that he denied receiving a shipment of lumber from me.

I inquired of his neighbours, I inquired of a man at the hotel who told me that he had known Mr. Maynard for some time, knew his family, said he had gone to school with Mr. Maynard and he pointed Mr. Maynard's place out to me as being the place where I delivered the lumber and I knew it was and, I certified this morning that I delivered lumber to Mr. Maynard and this is him.

Now, I took up a load of lumber at Rocky Rapids about one o'clock in the afternoon and at four o'clock that afternoon I arrived in Edmonton. I was told that Mr. Maynard was not home when I arrived at his place, that he was in the Legislative Buildings and, further to this that I would have to wait till the Legislative Assembly had adjourned before I could see Mr. Maynard. I waited there at his house from four o'clock until seven, as the evidence I gave last week that I had been to this place and I believe it was Mr. Maynard's place, I didn't know his face because it was in the dark and, I delivered a load of lumber after dark and I



1-P-4

Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (cont.) certify at this time that I delivered a load of lumber to Mr. Maynard and which he has denied in your presence and in your hearing and I state that I did deliver that lumber and that he paid me and to the best of my recollection he paid me in cash.

THE COMMISSIONER: All right, Mr. Coombs. Mr. Maynard you can continue.

Q MR. MAYNARD: I still don't recall the incident but it is immaterial for the purpose of this Inquiry Mr. Commissioner.

Now Mr. Coombs it is some two weeks ago, a little over, that you were here before the Commission giving evidence and of course, in two weeks you can forget some of the things that you stated at that time, particularly when it relates to matters that took place some ten or fifteen years ago or more. I would just like to recap if I may, with you, the background so that we know where we are going from there.

As I recall your evidence, you stated that you<sup>were</sup>/offered some lots in an area near the Celanese plant, you were offered the privilege of buying some lots in an area near the Celanese plant, is that correct?

MR. GILL: Mr. Commissioner, again as to what you said yesterday, I think if counsel are going to ask a witness concerning a previous answer, that they should do as we normally do, read from the record. We have the benefit



1-P-5

Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

MR. GILL: (cont.) of daily transcripts. If my learned friend is saying as is said on page 74 -- no, it was here in my cross-examination on page 74

" Do you know who owned that land?

A Well, I understood that it must be Mr. Hooke that owned it because I was offered land that I could buy, City property, that was going to be made into a Campbelltown, and I could buy lots there."

THE COMMISSIONER: Yes, well, Mr. Maynard, I think in view of the lapse of almost probably two weeks since this man gave evidence, in any event, it will be helpful to refer specifically to whether --

MR. MAYNARD: All I wish to establish is the background. I don't want to read through the eight or ten pages of evidence that are available in this matter, I think the background should be established very easily, I think Mr. Coombs will recall having indicated he was offered the privilege of buying some lots?

A I don't know if it would be lots, I would say property.



1-B-1

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q Property, and you stated also that you were not interested and it appeared to you to be a shady deal, you remember that?

A Yes, I do.

Q And you also stated that you started selling or delivering lumber to the celanese plant about a week or some weeks, I am sorry, that you had been asked about delivering lumber to the celanese plant a week or three weeks before anything appeared in the paper about the celanese plant, do you remember that?

A They had approached me concerning buying the lumber to build the celanese plant.

Q Yes?

A And that was before it was in the Journal or any publications. Now, I was told even by them that it hadn't been made manifest yet to the public, the public didn't know that the plant would be built yet.

Q Yes, and then later on you stated that Ideal Homes still owed you some money and that you telephoned Mr. Hooke at his office and told him that if he did not make arrangements to pay this immediately that you would do something about it, expose him or something; do you remember that?

A I remember that, I remember calling Mr. Hooke and telling him that I hadn't been paid for the re-sawing of the materials.

Q Fine. Now, with this background I am carrying on. When was the first time, Mr. Coombs, that you ever approached my friend Mr. Clement, about any of this information?

A I don't associate the question with -



1-B-2

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q Do you know Mr. Clement? Mr. Clement is sitting right here.

A I don't recall the man.

Q Had you ever met Mr. Clement before coming into this Hearing?

A I can't place the recollection of the man, it seems to me I saw his face but to say where I met him, I don't know.

Q Did you ever discuss any of these matters with Mr. Clement before you came into this Hearing?

A Not that I recall.

Q Well, you must have discussed it with somebody before coming here; who did you discuss it with?

A I don't get your question, I don't understand what you are -

Q Mr. Coombs, yes?

MR. CLEMENT: I just would like to make it clear, there is some uncertainty, that I have never seen Mr. Coombs before he appeared at this Inquiry.

Q MR. MAYNARD: I have no doubt about that whatsoever, Mr. Commissioner.

Mr. Coombs, my question is this: you were summonsed to appear here to give evidence in relation to the matter under investigation by this Commission?

A That's right.

Q And you were summonsed because it was thought that you had some relevant information to give?

A I presume so.

Q To whom did you give this relevant information in the first instance resulting in the summons?

A That I can't tell you, I don't know.



1-B-3

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q Mr. Coombs, Mr. Clement is the Commission counsel, he is the one that has asked the R.C.M.P. to summons all the witnesses to come here.

A That's right.

Q And you are telling us today that you have never discussed any of this information with anybody before you were called before this Inquiry?

A I discussed it, I discussed this with several people, but to say to whom and where and first, I don't know.

Q You have discussed it, you don't know with whom, you don't know where, and you don't know when?

A I do know concerning different people that I have discussed this with, but relating as to why I was called on this case right now, I don't know. There is no one has approached me in the last, I don't believe there has been anybody approached me in the last year.

Q Were you approached before that by anyone?

A Yes, I had been approached before that.

Q By whom?

A There was a gentleman by, he was, rather, Chairman I believe, of a Board that the farmers had, that is an Investigation Board at Rocky Rapids. I can't recall his name now. He lived here in the West, West Edmonton, the Farmers' Protective Association, I discussed it with him. I also discussed it, I believe, with a former Member of Parliament, perhaps a year and a half or two years ago, that I understood that he was a Member of Parliament.



1-B-4

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q Parliament or the Legislature?

A I am not sure which it would have been, I understood he was connected with the Government.

Q Just a side conversation, we are trying to see if you can recall the name of the man you saw. Did you ever discuss these matters with Mr. Reimer?

A I believe I did, it is a gentleman on 107th Street that had an office, I believe it is on 107th Street, that had an office there, and he was -

Q When -

MR. WRIGHT: Let him finish.

Q MR. MAYNARD: When did you discuss these matters with Mr. Reimer?

A Oh, I would say it would be a year and a half, possibly nearly two years ago.

Q Had you ever discussed these matters with anyone else before then?

A I discussed it with the Farmers' Board at Drayton Valley.

Q With the farmers?

A Yes. I had also had contact with a man from the CBC and he was in the Riviera Hotel; I believe in Room, I believe it was Room 6.

Q Somebody with the CBC?

A Yes.

Q When was this?

A I can't give you the exact date but I would say it is roughly, roughly eighteen months ago, probably twenty.

550

Mr. Tolson

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1-B-5

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q Mr. Coombs, I am reading from the transcript of the evidence on page 87 when you were being questioned by Mr. Crawford, and the questions asked and the answers given were this:

" Q Mr. Coombs, just prior to the 1959 election I presume it was 1959 from what you said, you got in touch with Mr. Hooke and told him unless you were paid what you referred to as a past due account for sawing that you would expose him, is that right?

A That is right."

Did this discussion with the CBC take place before you had discussed this with Mr. Hooke?

A No.

Q It took place after?

A I discussed this with the CBC after.

Q After the reference made here about your discussion with Mr. Hooke in 1959?

A That's right.

MR. WRIGHT: I should point out with the greatest respect that the 1959 is Mr. Crawford's suggestion, not the witness's.

MR. MAYNARD: Well, it is confirmed by the witness.

MR. WRIGHT: A great long question is confirmed, perhaps you would have that out with the witness.

Q MR. MAYNARD: Well, maybe if my friend has information the witness hasn't got, I don't know. My friend will have his turn, Mr. Commissioner.

Now, you stated that Mr. Hooke paid you a cheque on this



1-B-6

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) occasion when you contacted him because of the threats you had made him, is that correct?

A No, I wouldn't say because of the threat. He realized the debt was there and that possibly it should have been paid, and he wouldn't like the people to know that he wasn't paying his debts.

Q When did your conscience first start bothering you, Mr. Coombs, about the transaction that took place in connection with Ideal Homes?

A My conscience wasn't bothering me. It seems to me that the other parties' conscience was the one that was bothering and that they were doing an injustice to the public.

Q Well, you stated that when you were offered some lots you refused because you didn't like it?

A That's right.

Q It looked bad to you, is that right?

A That's right, to build a, to tell me they were going to build a Campbelltown there before it was ever surveyed and before the people knew anything about it, I thought it was rather going ahead of the people.

Q And you did not see anything wrong with supplying lumber to one of Mr. Hooke's companies for the celanese plant when nobody else knew anything about it?

A At the time I started delivering lumber they did know about it.

Q They did, but at the time that it was first discussed with you, the question of price, nobody else knew anything about



1-B-7

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) it?

A That's what I understood.

Q "Shady business" is the word you used in your previous evidence, you remember that?

A I remember using the word "shady".

Q "Shady business"?

A That's right.

Q If there was any shady business involved, Mr. Coombs, why did you consent to supply lumber for the celanese plant through Ideal Homes?

A I believe when I spoke about the shady business I was speaking of the Campbelltown, which I thought it was shady, the business was shady, and that I wanted no part of it.

Q Well, on page 80 of the evidence, I read from the transcript as follows:

" Q How do you say, how do you arrive that he was, at this business that he was using his office unjustly?

A That he was going ahead, in a contract, in a company trying to get the contracts before the people knew what was taking place in the Province, and where he had directed the celanese people to buy this land at Clover Bar, and that he knew of all of this, and yet the people of Alberta or Edmonton knew nothing of it at all; it wasn't even in the papers, to the people of Alberta. They knew nothing of it. I wouldn't have known if he hadn't have told me because it wasn't in the press.



1-B-8

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.)

Q You used the words 'shady business'; why do you use those words?

A I used those words because I felt that he was using his office unjusticely."

MR. GILL:

Mr. Commissioner, in view of what my learned friend has read I wish he would read at the top of page 80 of the same transcript, the question, it was my cross-examination, I asked Mr. Coombs, he was talking about an answer at the bottom of page 79:

" Q This was to be a new town, was it?

A I new town and a new location, and that I could purchase lots there, and they would sell them to me.

Q Did they put any limit on the number of lots you could purchase?

A No, it wasn't discussed. I wasn't interested. It looked to me like it was a shady piece of business and I didn't want to get into it."

MR. MAYNARD:

Exactly, it is a repetition, Mr. Commissioner, of the "shady piece of business" and "shady transaction" that my friend is referring to that I was leading up to.

MR. GILL:

But not about lots though.

MR. MAYNARD:

Oh, about lots, and about the entire transaction.

MR. GILL:

He didn't say that, Mr. Maynard.

Q MR. MAYNARD:

Well, the evidence is there.



1-B-9  
E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) Now, are these statements that have been read to you by both myself and Mr. Gill and the answers you have given still correct, Mr. Coombs?

A I believe they are correct.

Q And I read the last two, the last question again:

" Q You used the words 'shady business', why do you use those words?

A I used those words because I felt that he was using his office unjusticely."

Unjustly. Were you convinced at that time that he was using his office unjustly in connection with supplying lumber to the celanese plant?

A I was more convinced as the days went by, towards the time that I quit shipping to Ideal Homes entirely; I was convinced as it went by because Mr. Hooke would possibly be in the office and there would be a conversation taken up concerning the shipment of lumber and this Campbelltown and so forth, and when it would get to a certain point he would go in the other room and sit down, and once in a while he would speak up as though he heard the conversation, but he didn't want to be involved, and he thought by getting behind the door would keep him out of the involvement, but as far as I could see then, that he was involving himself.



1-M-1

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q You told us that you realized while you were selling lumber that there was something wrong; is that correct?

A There was nothing with me selling the lumber. There was nothing wrong with what I was doing. I didn't do wrong. It is a free market and I can sell to whoever will purchase and pay the price that I ask; there's nothing wrong with that that I can see.

Q But you realized that in the offer of the sale of lots to you there was something wrong, something shady, at the time the offer was made; is that correct?

A I did as far as the lots were concerned, and the property, yes.

Q And in so far as selling lumber to Ideal Homes for the Celanese Plant, you did not see at that time that there was anything wrong?

A Not with me selling lumber, no.

Q And there was nothing unjust about --- .

A There was nothing unjust about my price or the lumber or the shipments. It was all above board.

Q But at that time you said there was nothing -- you saw nothing wrong with supplying lumber to Ideal Homes for re-shipment to the Celanese Plant?

A As far as I was concerned there was nothing wrong.

Q But later on you felt that there was something wrong?

A There was when I became involved and accused of pulling crooked deals with the Celanese people, pulling the lumber back and re-grading, and found out it was somebody else



1-M-2

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (Cont.) shipping -- they were taking lumber from someone else instead of me, and accusing me for wrong shipments.

Q Was it at this point also, Mr. Coombs, that you realized that there was something wrong in Ideal Homes supplying lumber to the Celanese Plant?

A No, time after time that I've got -- that I went into the office, that I realized there was something that seemed to be growing, and becoming more manifest to me, that I could understand there was something there that shouldn't be.

Q In the supplying of lumber by Ideal Homes to the Celanese Plant? Is that what you are referring to?

A Well, their contract, obtaining the contract, is what I am --.

Q Obtaining the contract?

A Yes, before the people.

Q Before the people knew anything about it?

A That's right.

Q Is that what you are complaining about in connection with Mr. Hooke using unjustly his office?

A That's right.

Q The fact that Ideal Homes obtained a contract before anybody knew about it?

A That's right, I was told by Mr. Hooke.

Q And also the fact that he started supplying lumber under this contract that you say he obtained, you considered that unjust as well?

A That would be his act, yes.

Q I am asking you whether you consider it unjust. You are the



1-M-3

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) one that has made the charges here, Mr. Coombs.

A It would be unjust if he came to that point, that he would run ahead of the people and deliver the lumber. You will please understand that when I delivered lumber to Ideal Homes, I also delivered lumber to his construction in the West End.

Q That has been established -- .

A And I sold that lumber to these people before, and he had been a customer, and he could take that lumber wherever he pleased, but whenever the lumber went there he re-billed it, and then it was dumped.

Q You knew that the lumber that you were --- being delivered to Ideal Homes in July and August, 1951, was going to the Celanese Plant?

A A good portion of it, yes.

Q And you also knew, or at least you have alleged, that Mr. Hooke had used his office unjustly by making a deal with the Celanese Plant for the delivery of lumber to them before any announcement was made to the public of this province?

A I stated that, yes.

Q You stated that, and you also state today that it was an unjust deal that Mr. Hooke made at that time before the public of the province knew anything about it?

A That's right.

Q And Mr. Coombs, knowing then that at the time you started supplying lumber to the Celanese people that it was an unjust deal, in your own words, that Mr. Hooke had made with



1-M-4

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) the Celanese Plant, why did you participate in an unjust deal?

A There was nothing wrong in what I did. My lumber was set at a certain price and I wasn't implicated in the Celanese whatsoever, as far as I can see. I was dealing directly with Ideal Homes, and that what he did with the lumber was up to him; but my deal was straight and above board.

Q Whether Ideal Homes made an unjust deal or not you weren't interested in? You were quite prepared to supply lumber for the fulfillment of what you call an unjust deal. Is that what you are telling us now?

A Well, I don't ask people what they are going to do with the lumber when I deliver it to them. I take lumber some place and sell it to them. It wouldn't matter to me if he was building a lot -- putting up a building someplace where the City refused the right to build it, and they ordered it and they paid for it, that is up to -- I have -- have not committed myself in doing a wrong if he puts it in the wrong place.

Q Now, will you answer my question?

A I did answer your question.

Q Why did you continue? Why did you supply lumber to Ideal Homes for re-shipment to the Celanese Plant when you knew, you felt, it was an unjust deal?

A Their deal was none of my business, outside of the -- from the standpoint of justice to the public.

Q That is the explanation you are going to stand by?



1-M-5

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A That's right.

Q When did your conscience first start bothering you, Mr. Coombs?

A I -- .

Q About this entire transaction?

A I said my conscience didn't bother me. It was the other fellow's conscience was bothering.

Q At that time your conscience didn't bother you, but later on your conscience undoubtedly began to bother you?

A No, it did not.

Q When did you first decide to expose Mr. Hooke to the public?

A Well, I told different ones from time to time what was being carried on, what was taking place.

Q Even before -- ?

A And I also told them there would be a publication of a celanese plant that would be built in the very near future, from the time that he came to see me about the lumber.

Q Did you tell people from time to time about the offer you had received to purchase some lots, and about Mr. Hooke or Ideal Homes supplying lumber to the Celanese Plant before you made your threat to Mr. Hooke?

A I don't know as I would accept that a threat.

Q Well -- .

A I told him I would expose what he was doing. If that's a threat, well, that's --- I told people about it before that.

Q You told people about it before then?

A I had, yes.



1-M-6

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q Who did you tell before this?

A Oh, I told several people. I don't know -- I couldn't recall just who they were, but I'm sure I told it -- I told my wife.

Q And then after having told several people about this, you finally decided to put it up to Mr. Hooke, and you told Mr. Hooke: if you don't pay me this amount of money that Ideal Homes owes me, well then I'm going to expose you.

A I told him I would let the people know what he was doing.

Q And to the best of your recollection this took place just before the 1959 election?

A It was just before an election -- I didn't say '59.

Q Oh, well, Mr. Crawford -- .

A Somebody else put that in, not me.

Q I read again from the evidence on page 87. Mr. Crawford led off his examination with the following question: Mr. Coombs, just prior to the 1959 election --- I presume it was the 1959 from what you said -- you got in touch with Mr. Hooke and told him unless you were paid what you refer to as a past due account for -- you would expose him; is that right? That is right.

A That I presumed it was the '59 election, but I didn't -- the date I don't know, but I do know it was just before the election.

Q And why did you wait until an election?

A I didn't wait. I tried to collect it all the time, but I wasn't paid.



1-M-7

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q You never tried to collect from Mr. Hooke before then?

A Yes, I did. That office belonged to Mr. Hooke out there and he was a member of it, and every time I went to that office I was really going to Mr. Hooke or one of his representatives.

Q Did you go in to Ideal Homes' office very often after you stopped supplying lumber to Ideal Homes?

A Oh, possibly eight or ten times. I couldn't give you the exact number of times.

Q Eight or ten times during the period of time, trying to collect this account?

A I did.

Q And on these occasions you say you spoke to Mr. Hooke personally?

A No, I didn't say that I spoke to Mr. Hooke personally. I spoke to the man behind the desk that represented Mr. Hooke.

Q Did you ever speak to Mr. Hooke personally before you made the threat to expose him?

A I object to the word "threat".

Q Well, it's -- would you prefer the word "blackmail", Mr. Coombs?

A No, I wouldn't prefer the word "blackmail", it wasn't blackmail.

Q When you tell a person, unless you pay me such and such an account I am going to expose you, what do you call it? If it's not blackmail and it's not a threat -- use your own word.



1-M-8

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A It was just expose an honest debt that he owed me.

Q You would expose him?

A Yes, and it's not blackmail.

Q Well, I will leave it to the Commissioner to decide what it is. Now, you were never indignant -- .

MR. GILL: Mr. Commissioner, I have let my learned friend go for some time. He has had two bites at the cherry. I have been looking at the transcript and already he has covered this ground of blackmail, as he alleges, by the question on September 12th, page 106, and the question: you felt that by putting a little pressure, putting a little pressure on --- etc., -- and he uses the words --- you might be able to blackmail Mr. Hooke -- and there was an answer: I did not, it was not blackmail. Now, he has been all over this ground, Mr. Commissioner, and he can't plow it again.

MR. MAYNARD: Mr. Commissioner, I didn't raise the word "blackmail" until my friend objected to the word "threat" and I was trying to -- .

MR. GILL: You have raised it, Mr. Maynard, on September 12th.

MR. MAYNARD: But, Mr. Commissioner, I think we established at the outset that the --- when the examination of Mr. Coombs was postponed it was because Ideal Homes was not under consideration at that time. It was the Sherwood Park properties, and now we had understood, in view of the examinations that have taken place of Mr. Campbell and other



1-M-9

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

MR. MAYNARD: (Cont.) witnesses, with reference to Ideal Homes, we were going to cover the ground of Ideal Homes -- all I said, as far as I was concerned we would be through -- I would be through with this witness -- .

THE COMMISSIONER: I don't see anything improper so far in these questions.

Q MR. MAYNARD: When did you join the N.D.P. party, Mr. Coombs?

A I think you have alleged things and built up something in your own mind; I never joined the N.D.P. party no time.

Q When did you first discuss this matter with Mr. Reimer?

A I have told you that before, that I couldn't give you the exact date. I thought it was possibly eighteen months or perhaps two years. I am not just sure.

Q And did you discuss the matter with anybody else besides Mr. Reimer?

A I have told you that about six or seven times: yes.

Q But you could not give me any names?

A Yes, I did. I told you that I discussed it with a member of the C.B.C. that was at the Riviera Hotel, and he was there for some time.

Q And that was the only other name you mentioned? And you couldn't recall his name at that time?

A No, I think you are trying to cross the evidence again. I told you that I gave it to the president of the farmers' group at Drayton Valley.

Q You made a public statement at a farmers' group in Drayton



1-M-10

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) Valley?

A I didn't say it was a public statement; I said I give it to him.

Q Was this done, all done before the threat was made to Mr. Hooke?

A I still allege to the word "threat".

Q Well, I don't know what other word to use. I'm at a loss. Can you suggest a word? I don't want to put words in your mouth, Mr. Coombs, but I wish you could give me a word. You say it's not blackmail and it's not a threat -- what can I call it?

MR. WRIGHT: A statement.

MR. MAYNARD: Pardon? A statement. Before you made this statement to Mr. Hooke --- fine -- that unless he paid you this account that you would expose him?

A That I would let the people know the manner of business that he was carrying on, and I didn't say what manner of business.

Q Did you make this statement to these farmers at Drayton Valley before Mr. Hooke paid you?

A I did not.

Q It was after?

A After.

Q Many years after?

A Yes, it was several years after.

Q Did you make a deal with Mr. Hooke on this occasion that if he paid you this account that you would keep quiet about his



1-M-11

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) activities?

A I did not.

Q No deal was made?

A No.

Q Did you ever receive any money from Mr. Hooke after this?

A I did not.

Q How often did you receive payment from Mr. Hooke, either by cash or by cheque?

A That's the only money that I ever received from Mr. Hooke, I believe, outside of what was paid over the counter at his office at Ideal Homes.

Q Did you receive those payments from Mr. Hooke personally?

A Not personally -- at the office.

Q My question, Mr. Coombs, was how often have you received money, cash or cheque, from Mr. Hooke personally.

A Person to person I didn't receive any.

Q Personally?

A As person to person. I received cheques through his office at Ideal Homes -- if you call that person to person, well, I don't know. It's doing his business but I don't know if it's person to person.

Q But the cheques you received at the Ideal Homes' office were Ideal Homes' cheques?

A That's right.

Q Did you ever receive a cheque personally from Mr. Hooke?

A Not to my knowledge.

Q What about this cheque that he gave you on the South side?



1-M-12

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A Well, I have stated that cheque, but that's the only one I received.

Q That's the one I'm asking you about. Is that the only cheque you ever received personally?

A That's the only one I recall.

Q And you received no cash from Mr. Hooke at any time?

A Not that I recall.

Q Mr. Coombs, there was a -- . Do you read the Edmonton Journal quite regularly?

A I don't take the Edmonton Journal in my home -- .

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Maynard, are you embarking on a different aspect?

MR. MAYNARD: Another aspect, yes.

THE COMMISSIONER: I think at this point we will adjourn, and we will adjourn until ten-thirty.

(Adjourned at 9:46 a.m.)



2-B-1

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Maynard?

Q MR. MAYNARD: Mr. Coombs, just before we adjourned I started to ask you about the Edmonton Journal; do you read the Edmonton Journal quite regularly?

A Oh, not very regularly, it doesn't come to my home, I am not a subscriber.

Q You are not a subscriber?

A No.

Q And I suppose it is the Edmonton Journal, of course, that you are referring to when you say that there was a publication of the construction of the celanese plant away back when you were delivering lumber to the celanese plant, is that the paper you were referring to?

A Well, yes, I would be referring at that time to the paper.

Q To the Edmonton Journal?

A Publications, Edmonton Journals.

Q And do you come into the City quite often?

A I did, yes.

Q When you were running the planing mill were you also operating a truck?

A No, not generally, I don't think I was.

Q Your job was mainly to stay operating the mill?

A My job was operating the mill and disposing of the lumber.

Q Well, when you disposed of the lumber did you hire truckers to haul the lumber in for you or did you bring it in yourself?

A It was hired trucks.



2-B-2

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q You were hiring trucks?

A Hired trucks.

Q Mainly, I suppose you would make the odd trip yourself to haul lumber?

A The odd time I would go with the driver, usually I didn't.

Q Usually you stayed right at the mill?

A Oh, I wouldn't say that.

Q Well, you stayed where your business was running, operating a planing mill?

A I would say that I looked after the planer mill, I had somebody responsible for it in my absence if I was away that it would be taken care of.

Q What I am trying to get at, Mr. Coombs, how often were you coming into the City at the time you were selling lumber to the Ideal Homes people?

A That I can't tell you.

Q Once a week, twice a month?

A Oh, possibly once a week.

Q Possibly once a week?

A I couldn't say just how often.

Q I realize, of course, it is a long ways back and I won't press you further on it, but when you came into the City is that when you would usually get the copy of the Edmonton Journal?

A Yes, or sometimes the truck drivers might bring them, or, one way and another.

Q Yes, and did you know that there was an Inquiry set up by



2-B-3

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) the Alberta Government in 1956 to look into various matters relating to, of impropriety relating to the Government and Government Ministers?

A I don't recall.

Q You don't recall that. You don't recall reading the Journal that there was such an investigation, you don't recall reading from the Journal that that investigation was carried on over a period of several months?

A I do not, I didn't take the Journal. After I had finished with the lumber at Ideal Homes I didn't come very much to town after that, my appointments were mostly with Sherritt Gordon at Fort Saskatchewan or other points, and I didn't make my headquarters here unless I was coming to the City.

Q But you do recall there was an election coming up?

A It seemed to me like about 1955 there might have been an election, I don't know the date of the election.

Q I am going to end the confusion, Mr. Commissioner, about the date of the cheque. I am showing you a cheque dated June 9th, 1955, made payable to E. L. Coombs, is that yourself?

A That is my name.

Q And is this your endorsement on the cheque?

A It is.

Q And the cheque is signed by A. J. Hooke, R.R.2, Edmonton?

A That's right.

Q And the cheque is made out for the sum of \$278.00?

A That's right.



2-B-4

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q I will tender this as an Exhibit.

THE COMMISSIONER: That will be Exhibit 233.

CHEQUE, HOOKE TO COOMBS,  
\$278.00, JUNE 9th, 1955,  
MARKED EXHIBIT 233.

Q MR. MAYNARD: Is this the cheque that you received from Mr. Hooke on the occasion that you threatened to expose him?

A I still do not wish to comply with the word "threat", I would rather use "suspicion".

Q Mr. Commissioner, I refer to the evidence at page 89 when in cross-examination by my friend Mr. Crawford the witness was asked this question:

" Q But the actual threat of exposure, although you had demanded the money, there was no threat of exposure until the election was coming, is that right?

A Well, I had said before that if I wasn't paid I would let the people know what was going on at Ideal Homes."

Now, Mr. Coombs, there was no objection made on this occasion to the use of the expression "threat of exposure", why are you objecting to the expression today?

A I don't think that I was threatening anybody, I don't take it as a threat, I think a threat and an act of justice is two different things, it seems to me that it is.

Q And it is your evidence today that you never knew that there was an Inquiry being conducted after the election of 1955?



2-B-5

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A I will say that I heard rumors, I don't know that I read it, I heard rumors of an investigation, something about Jasper Place or something, and the building of Campbelltown, but as to what it was I couldn't tell you anything.

Q You heard rumors that there was an investigation being carried on in the Province as to certain Government activities?

A I would have rather thought it was towards Municipalities and the setting up of Campbelltown, and perhaps Jasper Place, and so forth, was entered in at that time; I heard rumors but I couldn't say anything.

Q Mr. Coombs, you want us to believe here today that in the little reading you did of the Edmonton Journal you never saw anything about investigation that was carried on in 1956, but yet you know that two weeks after your discussion with the people at Ideal Homes there was a report in the Edmonton Journal about the celanese plant, you want us to believe this?

A I don't get your question.

Q You told us, you told this Inquiry, that before there was ever any publication, well, let me read it, on page 80 of the Commission, of the report, in cross-examination by Mr. Gill you were asked this question:

" Q How do you say, how do you arrive that he was, at this business that he was using his office unjustly?

A That he was going ahead, in a contract, in a company trying to get the contracts before the people



2-B-6

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) knew what was taking place in the Province, and where he had directed the celanese people to buy this land at Clover Bar, and that he knew of all of this and yet the people of Alberta or Edmonton knew nothing of it at all; it wasn't even in the papers, to the people of Alberta. They knew nothing of it. I wouldn't have known if he hadn't have told me, because it wasn't in the press.

Q You used the words 'shady business'; why do you use those words?

A I had used those words because I felt that he was using his office unjusticely."

Now, my question, Mr. Coombs, is this: you have told this Commission that you saw the report in the press two weeks after, about two weeks after your discussion with the people of Ideal Homes is that correct?

A I wouldn't give you the date, I don't believe that I ever, I have tried to give an exact date.

Q No, I am not concerned about an exact date, you said one week to three weeks, yes.

MR. GILL: Now, now, Mr. Maynard!

A My statement -

MR. GILL: Mr. Maynard, he said at page 78, he said just about two weeks.

Q MR. MAYNARD: Fine. Just about two weeks, but there is another place one week to two weeks, but I am satisfied with two weeks, I am not quibbling over the period of time.



2-B-7

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) Thank you, Mr. Gill.

MR. GILL: Not at all.

A The statement I got in regards to the publication in the paper came from Mr. Hooke, not from the Journal and what I had read, it is his statement, he told me that it hadn't been in the Journal yet and it hadn't been advertised in the Province.

Q MR. MAYNARD: But you saw it in the paper two weeks later?

A I saw it in the paper later.

Q Yes, exactly.

A But just the exact time I can't tell you.

Q I am not concerned, but you want this Commission to believe that you saw this report in the paper after your discussions with Ideal Homes but you never saw anything in the paper about the lengthy Inquiry that took place in 1956 about Government impropriety, that is my question, Mr. Coombs?

A I did not see, I did not see the Government propriety -

Q You know nothing about the investigation that took place in 1956?

A I do not.

Q And it was because you did not know about the Government investigation of 1956 that, of course, you did not go before the Commission then in 1956, is that correct?

A I didn't say that.

Q I am asking you.

A If I didn't know about it I wouldn't even consider it, and



2-B-8

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (Cont.) I didn't know.

Q Exactly, and had you known about it, Mr. Coombs, would you have gone to that Inquiry in 1956 with this information?

A I would have had to have given a thought to it at that time, but not now.

Q Had you known of the Inquiry in 1956 would you have revealed this information to the Government Inquiry of '56, that is my question?

A I possibly would, I couldn't give evidence that I absolutely would, I couldn't.

Q Fine. Why didn't you go to Premier Manning with this information?

A What good would it do?

Q Is that the explanation which -

A I have been to Premier Manning lots of times and I never got any satisfaction yet.

Q When were you in to see Premier Manning first?

A I went there several times but he was the Minister of perhaps two or three different jobs, and I would be told that I could see him after two or three or four weeks, come back then and see him, and I would go home again.

Q Then you are qualifying your answer, you went to try to see Premier Manning but you never saw him, is that correct?

A Concerning business, I didn't say about this.

Q I am not asking about this, I am asking you first of all if you ever saw Premier Manning at any time?



2-M-1

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A Yes, I have saw Premier Manning.

Q When did you see Premier Manning?

A I saw him in his election campaigns.

Q At election time. You never went to see him at his office?

A Yes, I certainly have, but I never got to see him.

Q But you never saw him in his office?

A No, I didn't. I went several times but I never got in.

Q Did you ever write Premier Manning a letter concerning this unjust use of office by Mr. Hooke?

A Not that I recall.

Q Why didn't you?

A Well, I thought it would be just like the other dealings that I had with the Department: I would not get any justice anyway.

Q Well, Mr. Coombs, were you incensed at the fact that Mr. Hooke was unjustly using his office?

A Reframe your question.

Q Were you indignant at the fact that Mr. Hooke was unjustly using his office?

A I became indignant.

Q When did you become indignant?

A After I saw the injustice of the way things were carried on in his office, that there didn't seem to be any justifiability there, and you couldn't depend on it.

Q When was that? What year? 1951, that you became indignant?

A I would say it was.

Q And when did you first do something about being indignant?



2-M-2

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) You told us you never went to the Commission, the Royal Commission in 1956. You told us you never discussed the matter with the Premier and never wrote the Premier. When did you first become -- when did you first do something about being indignant?

A Well, I told different people, but as far as being a politician, I wasn't.

Q Is Mr. Turcotte one of the people you told?

A I don't remember meeting Mr. Turcotte.

Q Is Mr. Roger Lebeuf one of the people you told?

A I don't remember meeting Mr. -- .

Q Is Mr. Gill here one of the people you told?

A I may have told him, but if I did I don't remember the name -- I don't associate the name.

Q My learned friend Mr. Gill -- right here. Have you ever told my friend Mr. Gill about this before?

A Not that I recall personally; I may have. It was no secret. I didn't have anything to cover.

Q You may have spoken to Mr. Gill before and you don't remember?

A I don't remember, if I did.

Q Did you tell this to my friend Mr. Wright before -- Mr. Wright right here?

A No, I -- .

Q You never spoke to Mr. Wright?

A I don't believe I did.

Q Did you speak to Mr. Neil Reimer about this before?



2-M-3

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A I don't think I have ever met Mr. Neil Reimer to know him.  
I don't think I would know him if I seen him.

Q Mr. Coombs, you have been called to give the inquiry -- to give evidence before this inquiry. You undoubtedly spoke to someone, who wanted you called. Who called you?

A I don't know.

Q That's clear enough, thank you. When did your conscience really start bothering you about this incident about Mr. Hooke acting unjustly?

A My conscience didn't bother me.

Q It never bothered you at all?

A No, I think the other fellow's conscience was bothering him, but as far as my conscience, my conscience was clear on this.

Q Here you knew that a Minister was acting unjustly, in your opinion, and your conscience didn't bother you sufficiently to do anything about it?

A There wasn't much I could do offhand, but tell a few odd people.

Q Why didn't you tell people in authority about it?

A I would have needed a crowbar to get in to see Mr. Manning. I was there several times but I never got in past his office. He had two -- he was -- apparently had two offices there, taking care of two jobs, and when I would go there they would tell me it would be three weeks or a month before I could get an appointment, and I wasn't somebody that could be running up and down the road all the time.

Q I agree, but it would have been a simple matter to write a



2-M-4

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (Cont.) letter, and you never thought of doing so?

A Well, we had been -- I had been on occasions where the people had came together concerning certain things that they considered to be unjustice, and we had voted and sent a delegation to Premier Manning, and Mrs. Woods was our Member of Parliament representing us, and she told us that our complaint was very good, and it was legal and it was justifiable, but we wouldn't receive any hearing at all, that he would just let it go in one ear and out the other, and that's the way we found out it was, so I became discouraged even trying to do anything.

Q Did you ever tell Mrs. Wood, your M.L.A., about Mr. Hooke using his office unjustly?

A I don't recall.

Q You don't recall. So, you never made very much of a serious attempt at any time to call the attention of anyone in authority to this transaction that took place away back some sixteen years ago. Is that correct, Mr. Coombs?

A Not sixteen years ago, I didn't go to any length.

Q 1951 -- '51 to '67 -- sixteen years.

A No, I wouldn't say that, because that isn't the truth.

Q You delivered your lumber to the Celanese Plant -- that was in '51, was it?

A That was right.

Q And that is when the transaction was made with the people at Ideal Homes?

A That's right.



2-M-5

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q I'm not going to quibble about a few months one way or the other.

A All right, eighteen months ago I give a statement -- .

Q Sixteen months.

A -- statement -- sixteen or eighteen months ago I give a statement to the C.B.C., and that wouldn't be all of that time that nothing I -- expired, and nothing being done.

Q You gave a statement to the C.B.C. sixteen or eighteen months ago?

A I believe it was -- that was in the Riviera Hotel on the South Side.

Q Involving this matter?

A That's right, and I had spoke about this, this affair to different ones that I might bring it to light, but I couldn't get anywhere with it. It's like running into a brick wall. And I spoke to them, and I was called in there twice by C.B.C., and they paid my way in and out.

Q And that was some sixteen to eighteen months ago?

A I believe it was -- it was in the Riviera Hotel, the second floor -- I believe it's Room 6, and I think they were there five weeks collecting information, the C.B.C.

Q Well then, if it was eighteen months ago, then it was some fourteen years before you took a concrete step?

A No, I have been in a farmers' investigation of it -- Rocky Rapids there, Farmers Protective Association, and I was with that. We felt certain injustice in the Government, and we had told these irregularities that we considered were



2-M-6

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (Cont.) unjust, but we never was able to get any place with it, so we started what was known as the Farmers Protective Association, and I went out to that quite regularly.

Q And the Farmers Protective Association had to do with the question of land rights and surface rights and so on?

A Anything where the farmer was misused, anything that he needed protection on.

Q And did you bring up this matter at those meetings?

A I did.

Q And nothing was done about this?

A There was a statement made at them -- I believe that there was a statement signed -- I believe the statement was sent to -- by registered letter -- to Mr. Manning, but we didn't receive any -- anything on it, and neither did we get any chance to talk to Mr. Manning. We asked for an interview with him and he would come to the Association, but he refused to give us any consideration whatsoever.

Q Did you see the statement that went to Premier Manning?

A I don't -- I believe that -- I'm not just certain, but I believe I signed the statement that went to Premier Manning.

Q Did you read the statement that went to Premier Manning before you signed it?

A Well, I would if I signed it, yes.

Q Was there anything in this statement relating to the transaction in 1951 with Ideal Homes?

A It was -- it was -- it was given to the company and the company had made statements trying to get Mr. Manning into



2-M-7

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (Cont.) consultation that we might discuss these things with him, but we ran into a brick wall. We never got one consultation with him.

Q Now, will you answer my question?

A What is your question?

Q My question was this: in the statement that you sent to Premier -- that was sent to Premier Manning, and maybe with your signature, was there anything in the statement relating to the transaction of 1950 in which you allege that Mr. Hooke unjustly used his office?

A I believe it was.

Q You're not sure?

A I would have to get in touch with the president of the Land Owners Protective Association to know just what was sent in. I know I give them a statement, and I signed it.

Q Who is the president?

A I can't recall his name. He used to live four miles north of Spruce Grove, and he had a home in the West End out here.

Q Can you find out who the president is?

A Yes, I could get in touch with him and let you know who that--.

Q And will you give Mr. Clement the name?

A I will.

Q Mr. Clement, the Commission counsel?

A I will.

Q Fine. Now, you're not sure just what this statement contained, you say?

A It would contain about the same thing as we have here. There



2-M-8

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (Cont.) would be no difference, it wouldn't vary.

Q Does it contain a repetition of the allegation you have made here that Mr. Hooke unjustly used his office in 1951 in connection with the Celanese Plant?

A It does.

Q It does. When was that statement sent to the Premier?

A That I can't give you, the date, but I believe it's about three years since that was sent there.

Q Three years ago?

A I believe that would be in the statement.

Q And it was sent by the president of this organization, whose name you cannot recall?

A I understand it was.

Q I see. You understand; you're not sure?

A I can't swear that it was, but I understood that it was being sent.

Q That's fine. Do you know a Milton Durham?

A I do.

Q Did he do any trucking for you?

A He did.

Q Do you know a Mr. A. Sakovich?

A Yes.

Q Did he do any trucking for you?

A He did.

Q And John Morran?

A How is that spelled?

Q M-o-r-r-a-n.



2-M-9  
E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A I don't associate the name with anyone that was regularly trucking. He may have hauled one load.

Q H. L. Coulter? Did he do any trucking for you?

A He may have delivered a load of lumber because I purchased lumber at different places, and they delivered them to Ideal Homes, and I wouldn't perhaps have contact with a truck driver there at all.

Q Well, what about E. J. Sarin -- or Saun?

A I don't associate -- .

Q You never had any contact with those?

A Not with my memory -- I don't say I never had any contact with them, but -- .

Q You don't recall?

A I can't just recall.

Q What about R. C. Howard?

A I don't recall.

Q You don't know whether he delivered any lumber for you to the Celanese Plant?

A I couldn't say.

Q B. Missouri? You don't recall whether he delivered any lumber for you?

A I seem to remember the name, but I don't associate it with the trucking there.

Q You associate him with what?

A I said I seem to recall the name, but I don't -- I can't associate him -- .

Q You can't associate him with anything in particular?



2-M-10  
E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A No.

Q B. Becket.

A Barney Becket, yes, he hauled some lumber for me.

Q He hauled some lumber for you?

A Yes.

Q And did you also buy lumber from him for delivery to the Celanese Plant?

A I don't recall purchasing lumber from him.

Q Mr. Coombs, you have told us that you have lost all your records in connection with the Ideal Homes transaction.

A That's right.

Q So you are not in a position to verify anything that Ideal Homes might produce by way of records, or contradict them?

A Well -- .

Q Let me test your memory -- .

A I would go within reason at least.

Q Let me test your memory, and I realize this is going a long ways back, and of course I'm not going to insist on anything; if you can recall, fine. The records of Ideal Homes indicate that there were three loads of lumber delivered to the yard of Ideal Homes in the month of June, 1951. Does that strike just about -- strike you as just about being correct?

A I would think there would be that much, anyway.

Q Then the records also indicate that you started delivering lumber to -- for Ideal Homes to the Celanese Plant on July 6th, 1951.



2-M-11

E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A It could possibly be that date; I couldn't verify the date.

Q Of course you can't verify it, but it does sound reasonable?

A It sounds reasonable.

Q And the records also indicate that the last delivery you made for Ideal Homes to the Celanese Plant was on September 12th, 1951. Would that be about correct?

A I believe that would be about the time that I stopped the shipments.

Q I also have here from the records of Ideal Homes a statement of invoices for lumber that was delivered by you or to your account, either to Ideal Homes or to the Celanese Plant. I am showing you this, Mr. Coombs, and of course you cannot verify the statement itself -- this statement refers to a series of invoices, together with the date and the invoices and the lumber that was delivered on these various dates and invoices. You see this?

A I see.

Q Now, your name appears in the statement once, twice, three times -- this is during the month of August, 1951. Would you recall having delivered lumber during this period of time, about this number of times?

A I believe so.

Q It would occasionally happen that you would bring a load of lumber yourself?

A Well, either that or I would go with the driver and would sign the delivery slip.



2-M-12  
E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q I call your attention to the entry made for August 23rd, 1951, invoice No. 76341, Coombs -- 7368-- and the notation in the margin "Very poor". Do you recall having ever delivered any lumber to Ideal Homes that was classified very poor?

A No, I don't.

Q You don't remember that; although the entry is made here on these records, that brings nothing back to you. Were you ever told by Ideal Homes that some of the lumber you delivered was very poor?

A I recall having checked the lumber with the men where the lumber was being delivered, at the Celanese Plant, and they didn't seem to be displeased with the lumber.

Q Well, Mr. Coombs, this statement would indicate that generally speaking there was no problem with the lumber, but I call your attention to the one specific entry where there is a notation "Very poor". Now, surely out of all the loads of lumber that you must have delivered, or that might have been delivered on your behalf by somebody, you don't mean to say that every load was perfect, letter perfect?

A Well, we had mill run lumber, and this is what I considered the contract called for, was mill run lumber. We didn't grade it and put in all No. 1 in there -- neither did we grade it and put in No. 3. It was purchased from the -- from the sawmills, and it was merchantable lumber, and I--- as far as I know was never asked to pick a load of lumber up or take any back; neither did I ever take any back. If



2-M-13  
E. Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (Cont.) there was a lot of rejects and culls and so forth I would have been surely undoubtedly told about it, and I could pick it up and take it back again, and there would be no discussion about it, but I never took any back nor never was asked to take any back.



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Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q You were never asked to take any back?

A Not that I recall, no.

Q How Mr. Coombs when the lumber was delivered for you from Athabasca, by a trucker, to be shipped directly to Ideal Homes for trans-shipment to the Celanese plant, would that lumber go by way of Rocky Rapids?

A No it would not.

Q Would you see that lumber before it was delivered?

A I think I saw all the lumber that was delivered, at least the outside appearance, I didn't see right through the load.

Q So it is possible there might have been some culls in some of these loads that you don't know anything about?

A There could have been some culls but, it wasn't specified to me and nor was I asked to pick the culls up or take it back or take rejects back or declare them in any manner. The lumber was generally considered to be good and satisfactory.

Q Exactly, generally considered to be good but, of course, with some exceptions? There is bound to be exceptions Mr. Coombs when you delivered two hundred fifty thousand, three hundred thousand feet of lumber, there is bound to be some exceptions, wouldn't you go that far with me?

A Well, as far as I know there was never a plank went in there that wasn't usable and that wasn't fit for commercial work. If it had of been I would have thrown it out had I known about it or I would have instructed it be thrown out at my



3-P-2

Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

A (cont.) home. I wasn't trying to sell something that was no good.

Q I am not suggesting that you are, all I am suggesting Mr. Coombs that with the volume of lumber that was delivered to the Celanese plant, some of which came directly from your mill and some of which came from other mills, that you never saw, surely there must have been some lumber that was not up to par?

A If there was, I didn't see it.

Q Well of course, you didn't see it all, you have told us that, the lumber that came directly to the plant without going to Rocky Rapids you didn't see and it is possible there might have been some rejects in some of those loads?

A It is possible, there could have been a little rejects.

Q That is all I am asking. Mr. Coombs, did you ever have any difficulty with the Child Welfare Branch?

A I didn't hear you.

Q Did you ever have any difficulty with the Child Welfare Branch?

MR. GILL: I don't know where my learned friend is leading. This is not my witness as such, we don't have them in the Inquiry but I am wondering what relevance that has got?

THE COMMISSIONER: What is the relevance Mr. Maynard?

MR. MAYNARD: Credibility.

THE COMMISSIONER: Credibility.



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Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

MR. WRIGHT: With the greatest respect, My Lord, credibility turns on matters of honesty. Other matters are completely beside the point, with the greatest respect.

MR. MAYNARD: This is a matter of honesty.

THE COMMISSIONER: Well --

MR. WRIGHT: Was he ever convicted of anything?

THE COMMISSIONER: -- the matter of credibility, you can go pretty far afield on cross-examination. Proceed Mr. Maynard I will see what the line of questioning is.

Q MR. MAYNARD: Did you ever have any difficulty with the Child Welfare Department?

MR. GILL: Before that, I wonder Mr. Commissioner where my learned friend's source of information is because this, as I understand it, may be privileged information and I am going to comment, perhaps that source of information to him, representing who he does, is confidentially being held in the records of the Department and how does he become privy to it? Has there been another confidence betrayed?

Q MR. MAYNARD: Mr. Coombs -- yes, Mr. Gill?

MR. GILL: I am asking, My Lord.

MR. MAYNARD: I will change the question.

THE COMMISSIONER: Well, get the question and we will see whether it comes under this application.

Q MR. MAYNARD: Mr. Coombs, has there ever been any



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Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.

Q (cont.) publication in the newspapers about your problems with the Department of Child Welfare?

A Not that I know of, publications in a newspaper, not that I know of.

Q Not that you know of?

A Not in the newspaper.

Q Where would any of these publications take place if not in the newspaper?

A That I wouldn't know.

Q I will drop this line Mr. Commissioner and I will endeavour to ascertain whether this information I am referring to has been made public. My recollection is that it was but I do not want to test my memory on it because I have been at fault already in trying to recall things that happened some years ago.

Mr. Coombs, could I ask another personal question?

Have you ever been in Oliver?

A Pardon?

Q Have you ever been in Oliver, the mental institution at Oliver?

A I have been.

Q You have stated under oath that Mr. Hooke, Mr. Spady and Mr. John Campbell went to see you at Rocky Mountain House --

THE COMMISSIONER: Not Rocky Mountain House.

Q MR. MAYNARD: I am sorry, -- Rocky Rapids, Mr. Campbell has stated under oath here that he has never been to Rocky Rapids in his life. Would you like to reconsider



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Ervin Coombs - Maynard Ex.  
- Clement Ex.

Q (cont.) your statement?

A I would not.

Q You still maintain under oath --

A I still maintain that Mr. Hooke and Mr. Campbell and Mr. Spady came to my place and that Mr. Hooke himself introduced Mr. Campbell to me.

Q And the three of them were there?

A To the best of my knowledge.

Q And this is a positive statement made under oath?

A It is a positive statement.

Q Thank you, no more questions.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Clement?

MR. CLEMENT EXAMINES THE WITNESS:

Q Mr. Coombs, I was somewhat interested in the remark that about eighteen months ago you gave information similar to what you have given in your testimony here to a Canadian Broadcasting Company investigator?

A Yes that is right.

Q Did you say?

A C.B.C.

Q Yes, I take it to be the Canadian Broadcasting Company and, this was in the Riviera Hotel on the South Side?

A That is right.

Q How did you come to know about that?

A I believe that the C.B.C. became acquainted with the Farmer's Protective Association at Drayton Valley or, Rocky Rapids



3-P-6

Ervin Coombs - Clement Ex.  
- Gill Ex.

A (cont.) and that I had give certain evidence in statements to them --

Q Well Mr. Coombs, we have heard a great deal from you about your guessing what happened. Who got in touch with you in the first instance to see the C.B.C?

A Tommy O'dwyer was the man that called me and asked me if I would come in.

Q Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Now, are you through with this witness?

MR. MAYNARD: I am finished.

MR. GILL: Mr. Commissioner, arising out of the examination conducted by my learned friend Mr. Maynard, I have here some receipts signed by Mr. Coombs and dated, from the books that Mr. Campbell tabled with us. I think it might assist the Commission in tying down the dates if I introduce the evidence and identify it and I propose to make them Exhibits.

THE COMMISSIONER: Are they statements from Mr. Coombs?

MR. GILL: They are statements in the name of E.L. Coombs signed by him and dated --

THE COMMISSIONER: Well, you can present them to him and see if he can identify them.

MR. GILL: If I may.

MR. GILL EXAMINES THE WITNESS:

Q Mr. Coombs, you are being shown an invoice headed statement



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Ervin Coombs - Gill Ex.

Q (cont.) July 16th, 1951 Mr. E.L. Coombs. First, the correct spelling of your name is what, C-o-m-b-s?

A C-o-m-b-s.

Q Thank you. Do you see that document?

A I do.

Q And is that your signature on it?

A That looks to be the secretary that wrote my name in that statement.

Q No but do you see a signature somewhere on the bottom?

A Oh, E. Combs is at the bottom, that is my signature.

Q Thank you, I tender that as an Exhibit.

THE COMMISSIONER:

Exhibit 234.

INVOICE DATED JULY 16th 1951 ENTERED  
AS EXHIBIT 234.

Q MR. GILL: Thank you, My Lord. What was that receipt for Mr. Combs?

A It would be for lumber.

Q Sold by you to Ideal Homes Limited?

A That's right.

Q And was acknowledging payment of \$2,000.00?

A That's right; but the amount, I just don't recall the amount there, I didn't look at the amount, but, the signature is correct.

Q The document reads \$2,000.00?

A Yes.

Q You are now being shown a statement dated on what date?  
At the top Mr. Combs?



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Ervin Combs - Gill Ex.

A July 24th, 1951.

Q And is there a signature there that you recognize?

A Ervin Combs, I recognize that.

Q Your signature?

A That's right.

Q Acknowledging payment of \$800.00 to you from Ideal Homes Limited?

A That is right.

Q Thank you.

THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 235.

STATEMENT DATED JULY 24th, 1951  
ENTERED AS EXHIBIT 235.

Q MR. GILL: You are being shown a piece of paper dated August 28th, 1951. Whose handwriting is that?

A Who made this bill out is more than I know but I signed it, Ervin Combs.

Q So the signature thereon is yours?

A The signature is mine.

Q And that acknowledges receipt of \$4,069.89 from Ideal Homes Limited?

A \$4,069.89.

Q Thank you, I tender that as an Exhibit.

THE COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 236.

DOCUMENT DATED AUGUST 28th, 1951  
ENTERED AS EXHIBIT 236.

Q MR. GILL: Do you dispute the records of Ideal Homes Limited? And these are records tabled by Mr. Campbell



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Ervin Combs - Gill Ex.

Q (cont.) Mr. Commissioner, I will put them in when Mr. Campbell comes back but it shows a total of 295,864 board feet bearing a series of invoices and their numbers from approximately June 4th 1951 to at least August 27th, 1951. Do you dispute that total of board footage sold by you to Ideal Homes Limited?

A I couldn't say if I dispute that total or not. That isn't my totalling. I didn't make that document up neither can I say that it is that load of lumber that they told me I had delivered had been pulled back, which was delivered to John Shkrobot and they told me I was the only person delivering lumber there, to Ideal Homes. I don't know if it is included in that or not, that is the time that I left so I wouldn't know if they put it in there or not but I know if it is in there it isn't right.

Q You went on delivering lumber up until what time in 1951, to Ideal Homes?

A I can't recall the date but, if I was going by memory I would say possibly September.

Q I see. Thank you. Thank you Mr. Commissioner.

THE COMMISSIONER: Mr. Combs, you are excused now.

A Thank you.

(WITNESS STANDS DOWN.)

THE COMMISSIONER: This is a good point to adjourn until tomorrow morning at nine o'clock.

(The Hearing stood adjourned at

12.10 September 28th, A.D. 1967.)









